

The Auburn Public Library
Board of Trustees
May 8, 2018
History Room
9 AM

Trustees: Sonia Buck, Barbara Trafton, Alfreda Fournier, Patricia Gautier, and Doris Bonneau;
by phone: Nicole Rancourt
Staff: Mamie Anthoine Ney – Director, Susan Geismar – Development

Sonia Buck called the meeting to order at 9:15 am

Future Parking at APL:

Discussion began with Mamie's information that the Szanton construction is slated to begin in November, 2018, and that Troy Street parking would not be available after that date. She also has been informed that Doug Greene will be leaving his position in Auburn to take the Deputy City Planner position in Lewiston, and his last day in Auburn will be May 18, 2018.

Doris noted that nothing has changed in the city's plans for suggested parking scenarios since the last Trustee meeting. Mamie suggested that the now-short timeframe before Doug's departure has meant that some items are left for his successor.

Pat reminded everyone of the points Denise Clavette had made – what are APL's priorities: greenspace or service to customers? It was agreed that service is the highest priority of the Board, but that the parking/green space is of great concern, too. It was the impression that this message was conveyed to Doug and Denise, but that it was not formally put into writing.

Barbara suggested that the Library utilize different types of parking in any new plan: 15-minute book-drop spaces, handicapped spaces, 2-hour limits and long-term. Mamie noted that the Auburn PD does not have the manpower to police this type of timing, and cannot do less than 2-hour timeframes. Barbara suggested self-policing, with information handed out at the desks, might help.

Doris asked for clarification of the meeting today -- an action consensus? Clarifying the need to utilize Doug Greene's last days and expertise?

Barbara reminded the group that the Chapman House "green space" was supposed to be Library parking, and it was in the community's interest to have the Court Street lot for public parking. Could the city buy back the lot?

Sonia felt that it is not the Library's responsibility to provide green space for the city.

Doris asked if the city would reconsider the status of the Electrical Department's building next to the Library; Mamie said no, especially as it is on the National Register of Historic Buildings.

Mamie reported that she had been in conversation with Angie Snow of Camden National Bank about the parking. The bank owns all of the property around its ATM, the city owns only Railroad Avenue. Camden has been asked to provide parking for the Engine House and the new

construction on Spring Street, all of whom have needs, as well as the future Engine House Café clientele.

It was agreed by all that the city is falling down in its responsibility for city parking.

Barbara felt it was not inappropriate to ask the city to ask Chapman House to reconsider the lot on Court Street, to at least have a conversation with them. The city has a responsibility to its citizens for this issue. She felt that the Library's options should be detailed in an email to the city, and stress that we are feeling that things are being rush – which was agreed by all. She stressed that people like the whole experience of the library, not just the books, that one cannot separate the history/green space/building from each other, and that this is a place that is more than just bricks and mortar.

Alfreda suggested that a parking garage is needed on this level of the city, as there is so much going on here.

Barbara added that the YMCA will not be re-locating, but will be renovating its current building, adding to the parking issues. The city needs to utilize all its tools at hand, and not just to relocate a parking lot.

Alfreda agreed, saying that the larger picture needs to be considered. Mamie added that safety vehicle accessibility needs must be included.

It was suggested that Alfreda return to the Council with the request for a parking garage.

Mamie explained that the Szanton building will have 53 resident and 7 guest spaces for their building – but will residents be truthful about the number of cars they own?

Barbara questioned whether the “APL parking” will stay APL's lot. The current plan of new Library parking is “short term enabling” and a long term plan is needed before the Library's lawn should be dug up.

Alfreda agreed that this short term solution is not a long term solution, and due to Doug Greene's departure, APL needs to turn to Peter Creighton and Denise Clavette; APL needs to return to the city with its concerns. These plans are clearly not well-thought out, because of the tendency to push things through the Council. The Council needs to stop and think about this, and to discuss it further. Doris echoed that more clarity around these concerns is needed.

Barbara noted that this is a growing library, that it is not going to shrink, and that the current parking suggestion is not reasonable. Alfreda agreed, saying that the city should be thinking for the general community, not just the Library.

Mamie offered that the city needs to remember that the Library needs a seat at the table and needs to be a stakeholder in the long term planning. She suggested a letter from Sonia as Chair to the city officials. She read from Susan Weiss's and Bill Low's emails, offering their suggestions and concerns (see attached emails).

Barbara agreed that conversations with all of the surrounding businesses need to happen. Alfreda asked if the city really knows what property is actually available or will become available in this area. Discussion followed regarding the area's buildings and who lives/works there.

Barbara noted that it is concerning to do something so final and irrevocable as what is proposed, before exploring options.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Peter, cc: the Mayor and Council, and Michael Chammings, Economic Development Director. Pat reminded the group that timing is crucial, with the November construction date.

Doris felt that a good start would be to re-stripe the current lot.

Nicole outlined the benefits of sending a letter, that the future of parking should be considered, not just the Library's situation, and that all the stakeholders (the bank, businesses) need to be invited to the conversations, as this situation will benefit more than just the Library.

Alfreda believes that this is an excellent topic for a public workshop with the Council and stakeholders. Doris suggested that any future conversation should be open to all.

It was agreed that Sonia will write to the city, and forward a draft to the Board.

Doris asked for talking points to be developed so that everyone is on the same page when discussing this.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30.